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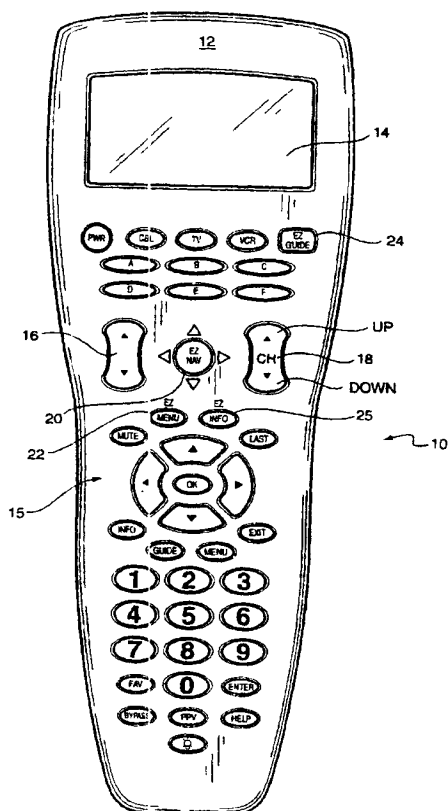
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[Continued on next page]

(54) Title: SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR AWARDED AFFINITY POINTS BASED UPON REMOTE CONTROL USAGE



(57) Abstract: Systems and method for providing and promoting television programming, advertisements, and other content to selected viewers. A display (14) is provided on a remote control device (10), prompts are monitored, stored in memory, and thereafter processed to reward viewers for responding properly to the prompts. Various methods for promoting such programs are also described.

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**SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR AWARDING AFFINITY  
POINTS BASED UPON REMOTE CONTROL USAGE  
BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

**1. Field of the Invention.**

5 The present invention relates generally to television systems and the Internet and, more particularly, to systems and methods for effectively promoting television programming, for developing viewership loyalty within selected demographic groups, and for selectively delivering advertising, promotional, and other content to television viewers desiring such content.

10 **2. Description of the Prior Art.**

Recently, substantial attention has been directed to the field of digital cable television systems, the Internet, and to methods of promoting and utilizing various typed of advertising and programming content provided on such systems. A number of analogous and non-analogous U.S. Patents, listed below, disclose methods for  
15 providing advertising or coupon information to selected individuals.

	<u>U.S. Patent No.</u>	<u>Patentee</u>
	5,855,008	Goldhaber et al.
	5,794,210	Goldhaber, et al.
	5,781,894	Petrecca, et al.
20	5,532,732	Yuen, et al.
	5,907,322	Kelly et al.
	5,500,681	Jones
	5,287,181	Holman
	5,128,752	Von Kohorn

25 While the foregoing patents describe numerous methodologies for providing advertising and/or coupon information to selected individuals or demographic groups via a cable television network or the Internet, the described systems suffer from several disadvantages. First, many of the systems require that current programming content provided to a viewer on a television screen or computer monitor be  
30 interrupted while advertising or other promotional content is provided on the screen or monitor. This, tends to irritate television viewers and computer users and, therefore, reduces the effectiveness of any advertising or promotional content that has been provided. Similarly, the systems described above do not allow for

advertising or promotional content to be selectively delivered to a viewer in a manner that is responsive in real time to viewer channel or content selections. Nor do the systems described allow for the effective promotion of television viewership affinity awards programs or "watch-and-win" programs.

5

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In one particularly innovative aspect, the present invention is directed to improved systems and methods for providing advertising and promotional content to television viewers and, in particular, to various systems and methods for implementing simultaneously within a cable system or other broadcast network a plurality of affinity awards programs or watch-and-win programs, each associated with a particular television channel, program, or timeslot.

For example, in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, a display is provided on a remote control device, and advertising and promotional content is selectively provided on the display based, at least in part, upon a current channel or television program that a user of the remote control device has selected and is viewing. Thus, it is possible in accordance with the present invention to selectively provide advertising and promotional content to a television viewer in real time and in response to channel selections that the user has made. This allows for "affinity awards" programs to be associated with a specific television channel, program, or timeslot within a twenty-four (24) hour period, and allows for multiple affinity awards programs to be run on the remote control device at any given time. Such programs may take many forms, but a "watch and win" format is presently preferred. In such a format, a viewer will be rewarded for interacting with the remote control device in a predetermined manner. For example, following the provision of a prompt on the display of the remote control device, inputs to the remote control device may be monitored, and data corresponding to those inputs and associated times of entry may be stored within a memory for contemporaneous or later processing by a content provider, such that the user of the remote control device may be rewarded for selecting a channel at a specific time or within a selected period of time, or alternatively, may be rewarded for not changing a channel within the selected period.

In alternative embodiments, questions about current programming or advertisements may be provided on the screen of the remote control device, and a

viewer may be rewarded for providing proper responses to the questions. The viewer, if he or she so desires, also may be provided via the screen on the remote control device with additional information about television advertisements or other content. Or, the viewer may "bookmark" an advertisement and thereby provide an  
5 indication to a content provider that the viewer would be interested in receiving additional information about a product contained, for example, in an advertisement or, alternatively, would be interested in receiving a sample of such a product.

In another innovative aspect, the present invention is directed to various systems and methods for promoting affinity awards programs using a remote control  
10 unit or an associated program guide. In one presently preferred form, a program guide is provided on a display device, and visual indicators are provided within the program guide to identify those television channels, programs, networks, or timeslots that are affiliated with a selected affinity awards program or watch-and-win game. The display device preferably is provided on a remote control device, but also may  
15 comprise a television set or monitor that is associated with the remote control device.

In alternative embodiments, the visual indicators may be included within, for example, banners incorporated in program marquees. Marquees are provided on screens, for example, when digital cable systems effect a channel change. As the content for the newly selected channel is decompressed, a marquee indicating the  
20 channel selected, associated network, and currently running program is generally provided on the television screen. In accordance with the present invention, an affinity awards or watch-and-win banner may be provided within a marquee provided on a television screen or, more particularly, on the display of a remote control device. In alternative embodiments, a tone or other audio or visual indicator may accompany  
25 the affinity awards or watch-and-win banner within a marquee.

Other objects and features of the present invention will become apparent from consideration of the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

30 FIG. 1 is an illustration of a remote control device in accordance with a preferred form of the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a flow chart illustrating a basic programming sequence used within an affinity awards program in accordance with a preferred form of the present

invention.

FIG. 3 is an illustration of a screen of a program guide including an indicator denoting an affiliation of a program with an affinity awards program or watch-and-win program in accordance with the present invention.

- 5        FIG. 4 is an illustration of a marquee that may be provided on a display of a remote control device or associated television set in accordance with the present invention.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT(S)

Turning now to the drawings, FIG. 1 provides an illustration of a remote control  
10 device 12 in accordance with a preferred form of the present invention. The structure and operation of the remote control device 12 is described in detail in copending application Serial No. 09/080,315, entitled "PROGRAM GUIDE ON A REMOTE CONTROL DISPLAY", which is incorporated fully herein by reference.

Turning now also to FIG. 2, an affinity awards or watch-and-win program in  
15 accordance with the present invention may be implemented using the remote control device 12 shown in FIG. 1. To implement such a program, a television viewing guide, associated channel map, and one or more promotional or advertising content data files are downloaded to a memory (not shown) provided within the remote control device 12 (step 110). The remote control device will then generally remain dormant  
20 (e.g., in a sleep state) until a television viewer picks up the remote control device 12 and enters via a key pad 15 an instruction causing the remote control device 12 to wake up and turn "on" an associated television set (not shown) and, for example, an associated cable television or satellite television tuner or descrambler box (also not shown). Upon detecting that the television set and cable or satellite TV box have  
25 been turned "on" (step 112), the remote control device 123 will determine the current channel that is being watched by the viewer (step 114). This may be done, for example, by incorporating a channel selection instruction within the cable box turn "on" procedure or, alternatively, by retrieving from memory data indicating the last channel that was selected before the cable box (not shown) and television set (not  
30 shown) were turned off. Once the current channel has been determined, data from the channel map within the program guide may be used to select an advertisement, watch-and-win prompt, or other content for depiction on the display 14 of the remote control device 12 (step 116), and the advertisement, prompt, or other content may be

depicted on the display 14 (step 118).

In the event that a prompt is provided on the display 14, the remote control device 123 then will monitor user inputs entered via the key pad 15 to determine whether the viewer follows the instructions provided in the prompt (step 120). The viewer may be prompted, for example, to select a channel at a predetermined time, or within a predetermined period of time, or alternatively, may be prompted to remain on the current channel (i.e., do nothing) for a predetermined period of time. To determine whether the viewer has followed the instructions provided in the prompt, the remote control device 12 will monitor and store any entries made by the viewer along with data corresponding to the times that the entries were made. The viewer response data then may be downloaded via the cable system, or another network, to a central database (step 122). The data stored in the database may then be processed, and the viewer's channel selection or other activity, or inactivity, may be verified (step 124). Finally, if the prompt was related to an affinity awards program or to a watch-and-win game, the viewer's account for that program or game may be credited in a proper manner, for example, by awarding points to the account (step 126).

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the methodology described above requires the following basic steps: using a screen on a remote control device, prompting a viewer to take an action (or to refrain from taking an action); verifying that the action has been taken; and providing the viewer with a reward for taking the action. Those skilled in the art will further appreciate that numerous variations of this innovative methodology may be implemented using a remote control device of the type described herein. For example, in alternative forms, a viewer may be prompted to answer one or more questions about a selected television program, advertisement, or other content, that is provided either on the display 14 of the remote control device 12 or on an associated television set (not shown), and the user may be rewarded for providing the response. The response may take the form of an evaluation or rating of the program, advertisement, or content that has been provided to the viewer, or the response might require the use, analysis, or memory of information provided in the program, advertisement, or other content. As an example, the viewer may be prompted to enter a numeric value corresponding for a level of satisfaction with a current television program or advertisement, or the user may be prompted to cast a

vote for or against legislative measure discussed on the news. Thus, the systems and methods of the present invention allow for broadcasters, advertisers, and the like to obtain tremendous amounts of feedback from the viewing public without interrupting current programming, and further allow for advertisements to be tailored  
5 to specific groups of viewers based upon numerous variables including, for example, currently playing programs or advertisements, various types of demographic data, and responses to prior prompts or participation in prior watch-and-win games.

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that, in another innovative aspect, the present invention allows for multiple affinity awards programs, watch-and-win  
10 programs, or other advertising or promotional programs to be run on the remote control device 12 at any given time. This capability is enabled by providing a clock and a program guide memory storage facility within each remote control device 12. Moreover, the use of a clock and stored program guide allows for various affinity awards and watch-and-win programs, or other content, to be associated with a  
15 particular channel, network, or times lot, and therefore, allows for different programs, etc., to be associated with different channels and/or time slots. This will allow for watch-and-win programs associated with different channels and common time slots to compete with one another, because the content to be provided on the display of the remote control device may be selected base, in part, upon the channel currently  
20 selected and the current time of day.

In other innovative embodiments, a television viewer may "bookmark" a television program, advertisement, or other content that is provided on the screen 14 of the remote control device 12 or, alternatively, on the screen of an associated television set. To bookmark an advertisement, the viewer might depress the "Info"  
25 key or a designated "bookmark" key provided on the remote control device 14 and, thereby, cause to be stored within the memory (not shown) of the remote control device 12 an indication that the viewer would be interested in receiving additional information about a product or service shown in an advertisement or, alternatively, that the viewer would be interested in receiving a sample of the product described or  
30 a coupon relating to the product described. The stored data may then be downloaded to a central database (not shown) in, for example, the form of a recorded viewing lot, and the downloaded information may be processed to ensure that the viewer is provided with the requested information, samples or product.



Alternatively, a “bookmarking” feature in accordance with the present invention may provide a user with additional information about an advertisement or program in real time. For example, where an advertisement is provided on the screen 14 of the remote control device 12, the advertisement may comprise several portions that are  
5 stored within the memory of the remote control device 12 and may be selectively accessed depending upon the interest of the viewer. An interested viewer could, therefore, “drill down” through a series of advertisements at his or her discretion depending upon the content provided. Alternatively, the remote control unit 12 could be configured to upload additional advertising information from an associated tap  
10 antenna (not shown), cable television box, or serial link to a personal computer or telephone, upon the entry of such a request by the television viewer.

Turning now also to FIG. 3, in another innovative aspect, the present invention is directed to various methods for promoting viewer affinity awards and watch-and-win programs. In such embodiments, an icon, symbol, or other indicator 200 may be  
15 provided within a screen of a program guide 210 adjacent television program listings, channels, or network call letters to designate that an affinity awards program or watch-and-win program is associated with a particular television show, times lot or network. An exemplary program guide screen 210 incorporating a watch-and-win indicator 200 is shown in FIG. 3. In one particularly innovative aspect, an award  
20 indicator 200 provided within a guide 210 provided on the display 14 of the remote control device 12 may be associated with an embedded or underlying program description downloaded to the remote control device 12, such that the viewer may obtain additional information about the program via the display 14.

Similarly, in alternative embodiments shown, for example, in FIG. 4, the logo,  
25 symbol, or indicator 300 denoting an affiliation with an affinity awards program or watch-and-win program may be provided within a marquee 310 that is provided on the display 14 of the remote control device 12 when a particular channel is selected. As shown in FIG. 4, the marquee 310 may include a channel indication, the network call letters associated with the channel, the title of the content running on the channel,  
30 and a watch-and-win indicator 300. The marquee also may be provided on the screen of an associated television set when, for example, a digital cable television box switches from one channel to another.

Finally, in still another innovative aspect, the present invention is directed to

the use of "forced" or "direct" tuning methodologies within television advertising or program distribution systems. Direct tuning involves transmitting specific channel select signals to a broadcast, cable or satellite television tuning box in response to all channel select inputs that may be entered into a remote control device by a user.

5 For example, if a cable television tuning box is set to channel 4, and the user of a remote control unit employing a direct tuning protocol pushes the channel up button on the remote control device, the remote control device will transmit a signal denoting "select channel 5" to the cable television tuning box rather than transmitting a "channel up" signal. This allows for a channel selection log to be readily compiled  
10 in response to viewer channel selection activity and, importantly, allows affinity awards programs and watch-and-win programs in accordance with the present invention to accurately monitor viewer input sequences to determine whether or not a selected viewer follows instructions provided within a given prompt or advertising message.

15 Preferably, the direct tuning capability is achieved through the use of a program guide, an associated channel map, and a programming signal database, often referred to in the art as an "R-byte" file or "IR command table", that are downloaded to the remote control device 12. The program guide and channel map function to show a viewer what programs are available on selected channels within  
20 predetermined time slots, and the programming signal database provides a link between the listed channels and the signals that are used for their selection. For example, depending upon the system used, channel "4" corresponding to NBC may be selected by transmitting a "4" signal, a "04" signal, a "04 enter" signal, or an "enter 04" signal to an associated cable TV box. Timing of the transmissions also may vary  
25 depending upon the configuration of the receiver or tuner with which the remote control device 12 operates. It may be noted that, where a remote control device 123 does not include a display 14, direct tuning may be effected using only a channel map and a programming signal database.

Preferably, a plurality of channel maps and programming signal databases  
30 may be downloaded to or stored within the memory of each remote control device 12, as the use of multiple databases allows a single remote control device 12 to work with any of a number of cable, satellite, or other signal distribution systems, so long as the remote control device 12 is properly configured at set-up. This also allows, for

example, cable broadcast networks to reassign channels without effecting hardware replacements, as any necessary changes may be reflected in the program guide and channel map for the relevant area.

While the invention is susceptible to various modifications and alternative  
5 forms, specific examples thereof have been shown by way of example in the  
drawings and are herein described in detail. It should be understood, however, that  
the invention is not to be limited to the particular forms or methods disclosed, but to  
the contrary, the invention is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives  
falling within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

**CLAIMS****We Claim:**

1. A method for selecting advertising content associated with television programming, said method comprising the steps of:
  - 5 using a remote control unit and a direct tuning method to select a channel for viewing on an associated television set;
  - storing an indication of said channel selection within said remote control input; and
  - using said stored channel indication to select an advertisement for depiction
- 10 on a display provided on said remote control unit.
2. A method for promoting television content, said method comprising the steps of:
  - depicting on a display provided on a remote control unit advertising content including an offer for an award of affinity points based upon a predetermined user
  - 15 input sequence to said remote control input;
  - monitoring user inputs to said remote control unit; and
  - in response to detecting said predetermined user input sequence, awarding said affinity points to an account of said user.
3. A method for promoting television content, said method comprising the
- 20 steps of:
  - prompting a user of a remote control device to make a television channel selection by displaying predetermined content on a display of said remote control device; and
  - monitoring channel selections of said user to determine whether said user
  - 25 selects a particular channel in response to said prompting.
4. A method for promoting television content, said method comprising the steps of:
  - selecting for viewing on a television set predetermined content;
  - displaying on a viewing screen of a remote control device a question relating
  - 30 to said predetermined content;
  - allowing a user to respond to said question using said remote control device; and
  - recording a response of said user to said question.

5. The method of claim 4 wherein said predetermined content comprises television programming content.

6. The method of claim 4 wherein said predetermined content comprises advertising content.

5 7. A method for prompting television content, said method comprising the steps of:

providing on a display of a remote control device promotional content designed to encourage a television viewer to view selected media content on an associated television set;

10 providing on said display of said remote control device one or more questions relating to said selected media content;

allowing a user of said remote control device to respond to said one or more questions using said remote control device; and

15 storing in a memory data indicative of a response of said user to said one or more questions.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein said selected media content comprises television programming content.

9. The method of 7 wherein ad selected media content comprises advertising content.

20 10. A method for promoting television content, said method comprising the steps of:

depicting at a preselected time o a display of a remote control device content designed to encourage a user of said remote control device to select a particular channel on an associated television set a later time;

25 monitoring said channel selections of said user using said remote control device; and

awarding affinity points to an account of said user if said user selects said particular channel at said later time.

30 11. A method for promoting television content, said method comprising the steps of:

using a display provided on a remote control unit, prompting a user of the remote control unit to take a predetermined action;

monitoring inputs to said remote control device over a predetermined time to

verify whether or not said user has taken said predetermined action; and

upon verifying that said user has taken said action, providing said user with an award.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said predetermined action is selected  
5 from the group of initiating a channel change or not initiating a channel change using said remote control device.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein said step of monitoring further comprises the step of recording in a memory of said remote control device a record of user input actions and times associated with said user input actions.

10 14. A method for providing advertising or other content to a television viewer, said method comprising the steps of:

providing on a display of a remote control device an advertisement and instructions for receiving additional information based upon a predetermined user input to the remote control device;

15 monitoring over a selected period of time user inputs to said remote control device to determine whether said user has entered into said remote control device said predetermined user input; and

upon detecting said predetermined user input, providing on said display said additional information.

20 15. A method for providing advertising or other content to a television viewer, said method comprising the steps of:

providing on a display of a remote control device an advertisement and instructions for receiving a plurality of sets of additional information based upon predetermined sets of user inputs to the remote control device;

25 monitoring over a selected period of time user inputs to said remote control device to determine whether said user has entered into said remote control device any one of said predetermined user inputs; and

upon detecting one of said predetermined user inputs, providing on said display additional information corresponding to said detected one of said  
30 predetermined user inputs.

16. A method for promoting a television viewership affinity awards program, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a program guide on a display device; and

providing one or more visual indicators within said program guide, said visual indicators identifying one or more television programs that are affiliated with an affinity points award program.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said display device comprises a television  
5 monitor.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein said display device comprises a display screen provided on a remote control device.

19. A method for promoting a television viewership affinity awards program, said method comprising the steps of:

10 providing a program guide on a display device, said program guide including a program listing and an affinity pints award listing; and

allowing a user of said display device to select for depiction on said display device either said program listing or said affinity points award listing.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein said display device comprises a television  
15 monitor.

21. The method of claim 19, wherein said display device comprises a display screen provided on a remote control device.

22. A method for promoting a television viewership affinity awards program, said method comprising the steps of:

20 providing on a viewing screen a pop-up marquee associated with a television program; and

including within said marquee an indication that said television program is associated with an affinity awards program.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein said indication that said television  
25 program is associated within an affinity awards program is provided within a banner comprising a portion of said marquee, and content within said banner is variable based upon stored data identifying a current channel selected by said viewer.

24. The method of claim 22, wherein said indication that said television program is associated with an affinity awards program comprises a mark associated  
30 with said program.

25. A method for promoting a television viewership affinity awards program, said method comprising the steps of:

providing on a viewing screen a pop-up marquee associated with a television

program;

including within said marquee an indication that said television program is associated with an affinity awards program; and

associating with said marquee a tone to be provided by a tone generator of  
5 one of a remote control device or a television set associated with said remote control device, upon a depiction of said marquee on said viewing screen.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein said viewing screen comprises a screen provided on said remote control device.

27. The method of claim 25, wherein said screen comprises a viewing screen  
10 of said television set.

28. A method for enabling a television user to obtain additional information related to selected content provided on a television set, said method comprising the steps of:

maintaining within a memory of a remote control device, a channel selection  
15 log, said channel selection log comprising a list of channels selected by a user, times upon which said channels were selected, and one or more bookmark indicators;

allowing a user of said remote control device to select one or more channels for viewing on an associated television set using said remote control device and a direct tuning methodology;

20 allowing said user of said remote control device to enter into said channel selection log one or more of said bookmark indicators, said bookmark indicators denoting that said user of said remote control device would like to receive additional information with respect to selected content provided on said television set at a predetermined time; and

25 downloading said channel selection log to a database and thereafter identifying any stored bookmark indicators present within said database, such that said additional information may be provided to said user.

29. A method for enabling a television user to obtain additional information related to selected content provided on a television set, said method comprising the  
30 steps of:

maintaining within a memory a channel selection log, said channel selection log comprising a listing of channels selected by a user of a remote control device, times upon which said channels were selected, and one or more bookmark



indicators;

allowing a user of said remote control device to select one or more channels for viewing on said television set using said remote control device and a direct tuning methodology;

5 allowing said user of said remote control device to enter into said channel selection log one or more of said bookmark indicators, said bookmark indicators denoting that said user of said remote control device would like to receive additional information with respect to selected content provided on said television set at a predetermined time; and

10 downloading said channel selection log to a database and thereafter identifying any stored bookmark indicators present within said data base, such that said additional information may be provided to said user.

30. An apparatus comprising:

a remote control unit comprising a display, transmitter and receiver circuitry for  
15 transmitting signals to an associated television monitor and receiving signals from a program guide data transmission source, a microprocessor and memory,

said microprocessor controlling said display and said transmitter and receiver circuitry, and

said memory having stored therein a program that, when executed by said  
20 microprocessor, allows for advertising and promotional content to be selected for depiction on said display based upon a predetermined relationship between said advertising and promotional content and a channel indicator stored within said memory.

31. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein said advertising and promotional  
25 content comprises an advertisement promoting television content on a channel other than a channel corresponding to said channel indicator.

32. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein said advertising and promotional  
content comprises one or more questions corresponding to television content on a channel corresponding to said channel indicator.

30 33. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein said advertising and promotional content comprises an offer of an award for selecting at a predetermined time a channel other than a channel corresponding to said channel indicator.

34. The apparatus of claim 30, wherein said advertising and promotional

content comprises an offer of an award for selecting at a predetermined time a channel corresponding to said channel indicator.

35. A method for promoting television programming, said method comprising the steps of:

5 using a remote control device tracking channel selections made by a television viewer;

storing within a memory provided in said remote control device a channel selection log comprising a list of channels selected by said user and times upon which said channels were selected;

10 allowing a user of said remote control device to enter into said remote control device one of a plurality of indicators corresponding to a degree of satisfaction with programming content depicted on an associated television set; and

storing said one of said plurality of indicators within a predetermined area of said channel selection log.

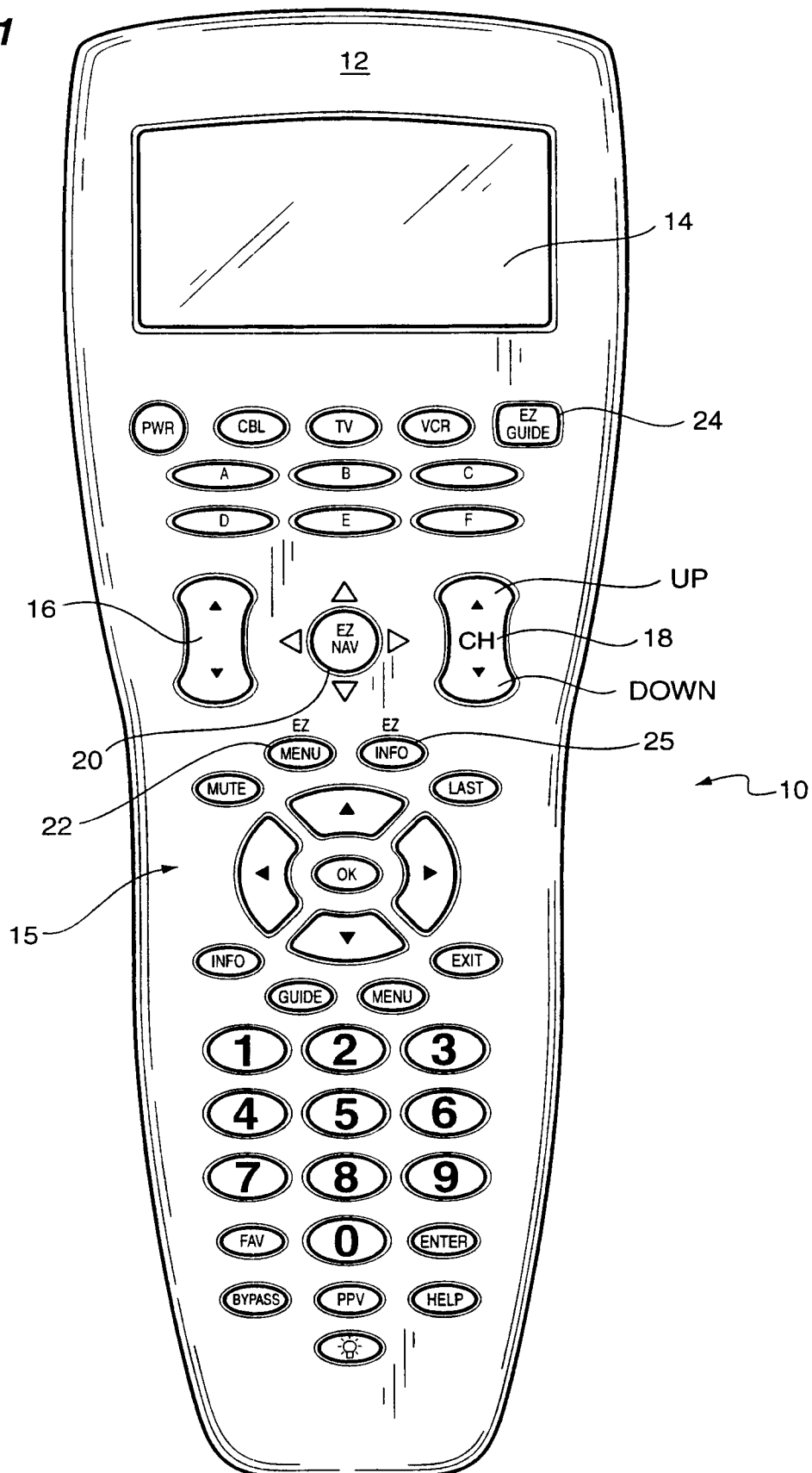
15 36. A method for promoting television programming, said method comprising the steps of:

maintaining within a memory of a remote control device a channel selection log, said channel selection log comprising a listing of channel selections, times upon which said channel selections were made, and selected indicators representative of  
20 viewer satisfaction with selected programming content provided on an associated television set;

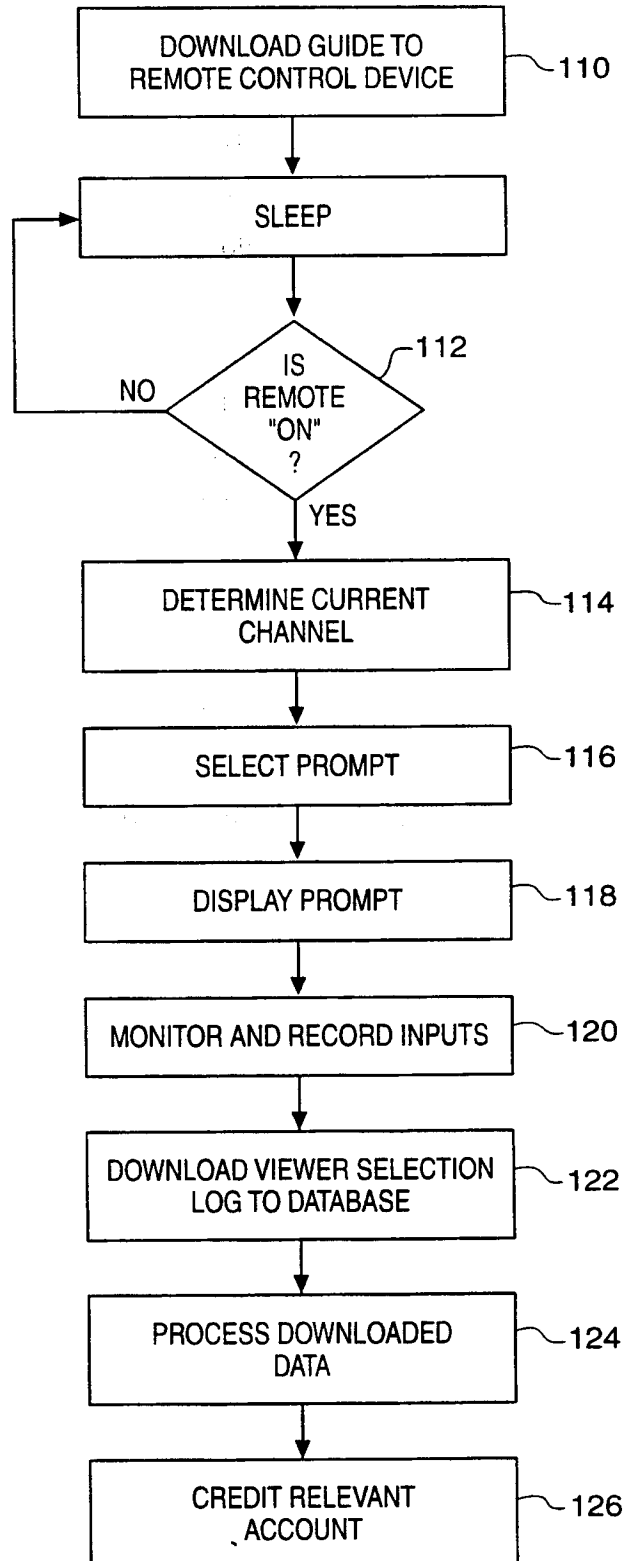
allowing a person to enter into said remote control device one or more of said selected indicators while said selected programming content is provided on said associated television set; and

25 downloading said channel selection log from said remote control device to a remote database in a predetermined manner.

1/3

**FIG. 1**

2/3

**FIG. 2**

3/3

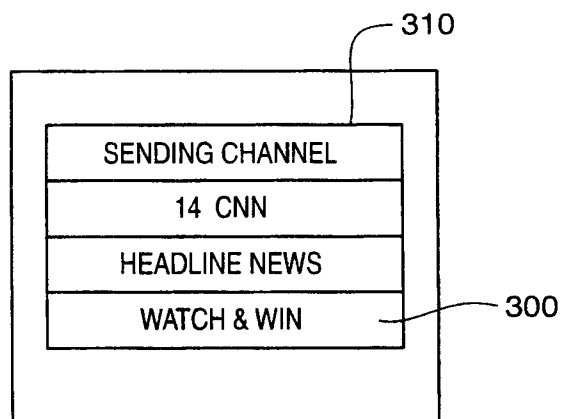
**FIG. 3**

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KCBS	ET	
04	SEINFELD	*W
KKTV	NEWS	

200

**FIG. 4**



## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.  
PCT/US00/41496

**A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**

IPC(7) : H04N 7/16

US CL : 725/23

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

**B. FIELDS SEARCHED**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 725/13, 23, 32-36, 39-46; 348/734; H04N 7/16, 7/173

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X,P	US 6,130,726 A (DARBEE et al.) 10 October 2000 whole document	1-36
X,P	US 6,002,450 A (DARBEE et al.) 14 December 1999 whole document	1-36
A	US 5,710,605 A (NELSON) 20 January 1998 whole document	1-36
A,P	US, 6,040,829 A (CROY et al.) 21 March 2000 whole document	1-36
A	US 5,410,326 A (GOLDSTEIN) 25 April 1995 whole document	1-36

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents.	*T* later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
*A* document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	*X* document of particular relevance, the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
*E* earlier document published on or after the international filing date	*Y* document of particular relevance, the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
*L* document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	*G* document member of the same patent family
*O* document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means	
*P* document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed	

Date of the actual completion of the international search

26 FEBRUARY 2001

Date of mailing of the international search report

19 MAR 2001

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US  
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## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.  
PCT/US00/41496

## C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No
A,P	US 6,057,872 A (CANDELORE) 02 May 2000 whole document	1-36

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